

True Longings

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[0 : 00] Father, we ask that you would fan into flame within us the true longings and yearnings that are in us as human beings.

Father, our yearnings are too weak. We often do not recognize them, but we ask that you would fan into flame within us the longings and yearnings of our heart.

And as you fan into flame, Father, the longings and yearnings of our heart, help us, Father, to take comfort in the gospel and to read your word, as seen in it, the end of our longings and our yearnings.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. Just recently, China celebrated being in existence for 70 years.

One of the things that I don't think it was talked about very much in the different news reports about China is that almost from day one, China has persecuted Christians.

[1 : 09] At some points in time, very, very, very severely. Other times, not quite as much. And in fact, right now, there's a growing persecution of Christians in China.

And one of the things which is behind the persecution of Christians in China is the desire of the Chinese government, or the party, I should say.

Government gives the wrong impression. The Chinese Communist Party is that they want to make China more Chinese and sort of exclusively Chinese as it's understood by the Chinese communists. And so any type of outside influence or anything which doesn't seem to be Chinese, they want to have to put to death. It's not as well known, it's even less well known in Canada that there is, in fact, growing persecution of Christians in India.

Mission organizations have been forced to leave the country, and not all of them, but many of them. And part of what is at work there is a type of Hindu nationalism with a desire to have foreign, non-Indian, non-Hindu influences removed from the country and to have India become more Indian and more Hindu.

[2 : 22] And it isn't reported very much in the press in Canada, but it's something which has been developing over the last few years or longer. Now, I just want to share that and hold that in sort of a bit of a tension or a bit of a difference to one thing that happened to me very recently.

I was in one of my favorite coffee shops, and, you know, I used to always have my Bible open when I was working on my sermon. True Confessions, other than one day of the week, I've gotten so used to using an electronic version of the Bible that I, you know, I use that silly little phone because at my fingertips, I have like dozens and dozens of versions and all that type of stuff.

So I realized I wasn't having as many conversations as I used to. So now, whenever I'm working, on my sermon, or just when I'm working, I'll have a Christian book out open. And this particular time, I had a book by C.S. Lewis on the Psalms, and I was working on my sermon.

And an Asian couple came into the coffee shop, and I wasn't really, I wasn't paying any attention to them. All of a sudden, the man said, excuse me. And I looked up, and he said, you're reading C.S. Lewis.

And I said, yes. And then he looked at me, and he said, are you a brother? And I said, yes. And he reached out his hand, shook my hand.

[3 : 43] Good to meet a brother. And it made me think afterwards, as I was going home at a time a couple of years ago when I was in Chicago, at the airport in Chicago, and I had been at a conference, a Christian conference, and I happened to be on the same plane with somebody from the conference.

They were flying to Toronto from Chicago, and I was flying to Ottawa. But we had time, and so we went to a place to have supper, not a very healthy supper, I think, you know, one of those, you

know, two billion calorie hamburgers with fries.

And we ordered our meal, and there was no ketchup on the table. We asked, and the waitress said, do you want ketchup? We said, yes. But as she was going to get the ketchup, we bowed our heads, and we prayed grace.

Prayed grace. And with our eyes closed. And then we realized that she had come back, and I wish I could imitate her. She didn't have a Chicago accent. She had some pleasant southern accent. I wish I could imitate it. And she said, it's so nice to see brothers unashamed of praying in the Chicago airport. This African-American woman in Chicago from somewhere in the deep south. [4 : 54] And that's how she spoke to two white guys. And it just feels so right, doesn't it? So how, you know, why is it that there'd be many people in our country, and not only in our country, but many places around the world, who have a sense that there's just something not right about a country just wanting to be more American, or more Chinese, or more Canadian, or more white, or more black, or more whatever.

That there's something just somehow right about the races, and the cultures, and the ethnicities somehow being in harmony. And the Bible text that Laurier read that we're going to look at actually speaks very powerfully into this situation.

So it'd be a great help to me, and a great benefit to you, if you were to get your Bibles out and look. It's really, you know, we're going to have the scripture text up on the screen, but it's a really good thing to be able to have your own Bibles with you, that you can make some notes on them, and all of that type of stuff, maybe something you want to memorize or look at later on.

But we also have the text up here on the screen, and here's how it begins. It begins like this. It's Ephesians chapter 3. Ephesians chapter 3, and we're going to be looking at verses 1 to 13, but we're going to obviously start at verse 1.

Not obviously. We will start at verse 1 of going through Ephesians 3 to 1. We're preaching through the book of Ephesians. That's why we're looking at this text, and here's how it begins. For this reason, I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles, and just sort of pause.

[6 : 28] One of the things which is really interesting about this letter is that Paul begins to say one thing, and then something pops into his head, and he's going to actually spend verses 2 to 13 on this other thing that pops into his head, which is what we're going to look at this week, and next week, we get to verse 14.

He says, oh yeah, I was going to say, get back on track, Paul, and he goes right back to what he was going to originally talk about, which is this spectacularly beautiful and powerful, mind-blowing prayer, which we're going to look at next week.

But Paul is going to talk about one thing, and all of a sudden, something pops into his head, and what really pops into his head is sort of connected to several things. I've said over the different weeks that Paul is writing this from jail. This is why I know that he's writing it from jail, because he talks about being in prison, and from a variety of other things, he's in jail in Rome, and from a variety of other things, if you look at the book of Acts, and you put things together, interestingly enough, one of the reasons, there's two reasons he's in jail.

One of the reasons he's in jail is because he's a Christian. The other reason is because he understands the Christian faith to mean that God is making a multiracial, multicultural, multi-ethnic new society, and he is willing to go to jail over that proclamation.

And the word Gentiles is a bit of an unusual word if you're a guest here this morning, and for the Jewish people at the time that Paul was writing this, it's around the year 60. Basically, for Jewish people, the word was very simple.

[7 : 57] There were Jewish, and there was everybody who wasn't Jewish, and if you weren't Jewish, you were a Gentile. And in those days, basically, it meant you were a pagan as well, because that's basically the only options, fundamentally, was being a Jew who believed in the one God and pagans who, I know there's a little bit of things about Zoroastrianism, but fundamentally, just Jews and pagans.

And that's who he's talking about. He's in jail because of the pagans, because of everybody other than Jews. And he pauses, and he's going to sort of explain why it is he's in jail.

So look at what comes next. He's going to explain why he's in jail. Look at verses 2 and following. Assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you.

So he's in jail because of God's grace was given to him, and God's grace was given to him not just to puff himself up, but for other people, for them. And then in verse 3, how the mystery was made

known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.

That's earlier on in Ephesians. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men or the daughters of men in other generations, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit.

[9 : 24] Now just sort of pause there for a second. This sounds very proud and exclusive, doesn't it? I, Paul, know things, a mystery which has been hidden to all other human beings, and I know it.

And it sounds actually very proud. In fact, many Canadians, when they hear something like this, it strikes them as a very proud claim, an arrogant type of claim that will make you more and more proud and make you more and more arrogant.

But it's actually the complete opposite. When we think that we're mishearing and misunderstanding what's going on. the other night, two weeks ago, I was trying to describe, I teach a course in preaching, and I was trying to describe sort of how the gospel works and how it changes lives.

And one of the things I was trying to get people to understand is that there's a default way of human beings thinking. And the gospel goes against that default way of human thinking.

And I'm not going to go into the specific thing, but there's the same thing here. There's a default way of human beings thinking. And so, because we have this default way of thinking, when we hear claims like this, we just interpret it within our default way of thinking.

[10 : 37] But Paul actually here is saying something which is profoundly anti-proud. It's profoundly humbling. I'm going to put it up here in terms of the form of a point.

And the point is this, that the true and living God stooped down to Paul to reveal some of what he is thinking and doing.

The true and living God stooped down to Paul to reveal some of what he is thinking and doing. This is connected to the blog that I've written this week, which is in the bulletin and it's also online, which is the default thing of the human mind, the human being, is that there's ways for us to ascend to God, to know God and what he's thinking and what he's planning.

It's a default of almost every single human being. If there's some way for you or me to do this, it might be through meditation, it might be through rituals, it might be through science or philosophy, it might be through poetry, it might be through developing your mental powers or your emotional powers.

It might be just that everybody in the culture, like time out, on the electronic version of the blog, if you look it up later on, I've added a little two sentences that it's not there yet, it'll be there on Monday.

[11 : 53] Basically, all progressives' thoughts, even though most progressives don't believe there is a God that exists, in fact, at the heart of all progressive thought in a secular form is the belief that they know the future and they know how things are moving towards the future and they know that the future is good and all of those things are things that only God could know and only God could do and so hidden within all claims of progressive thought is a claim to know the mind of God and as I talk about in the blog and I'll share with you right now because you don't have to read my blog, like why read my blog?

here's the thing, I'll use a different example from in the blog, what am I thinking of right now? Okay, I don't know how many of you guessed that I was thinking about the fact that I have two grandchildren being born in January.

Anybody guess that? You'd guess it, you wouldn't know it, right? So here's the thing, if you human beings can't figure out what another human being is thinking, why on earth would you think you can think what God, know what God is thinking?

If you are completely and utterly dependent upon me as a human being to tell you what I'm thinking, why is it we think any human being, any human being could ever know what God is thinking?

Unless God tells us, you can't know. And so what Paul is saying here is Paul is saying here there's mysteries that only God knows and he's not saying, and by the way, because of my rituals, because of the power of my intellect, because of the spectacular, sophisticated, way of my emotions and my poetic sensibilities and just, and because of my physical regimen and my diet and all of that stuff, I, no, no, he's not saying that and later on he's even going to mention I'm the least of the least of the least of the apostles.

[13 : 46] Paul is just making a claim that unworthy as he is, those of you who know a little bit about Paul, why would he say on and on and on throughout his life that he was unworthy? He would say on and on and on throughout his entire life that he was unworthy is because he so thought that

Jesus was a dangerous faker, that he conspired with others in positions of power and authority to put Christians in jail and to have them killed.

That's why. And he's saying as worthy as he is, God stooped down to Paul to reveal some, not everything, obviously, of what God is thinking and doing. and that's all that Paul did. He just communicates something that he humbly received. You see, it's so hard for us to think that human beings aren't making this claim of knowing what God thinks, which is absurd.

That when we read something in the Bible like this, we put it within our categories and don't understand that God's making a very, Paul, the Bible here is making a very, very, very, very different claim.

Now, some of you might say, why on earth should we believe such a claim? And that's a very, very good example. I have a friend I talk to regularly and he regularly tells me, you know, every religion makes some types of claims like this and I actually have to keep telling him, actually, they don't all make the same type of claim, by the way.

[15:11] They make actually very, very different claims. But why should we believe this? And I'm not going to go into a long, a long thing about it other than just to say this, that if you know anything at all about Paul from history, you know that he went from being a person who thought that Jesus was a dangerous fake to being a person who saw Jesus after he had risen from the dead.

And he, in fact, is an eyewitness to the truth that Jesus died and tasted everything there is to taste of death and on the third day he emerged on the far side of death, having defeated death, that he was resurrected.

And Paul is an eyewitness of this truth and he will eventually die a martyr's death maintaining that right till the end when all he had to do to get out of suffering and to get out of death was to say, no, no, just made it up.

Just made it up. Goes to his death. Goes to his death. But I want to challenge you with something else because we're going to look at a sense of what Paul is claiming.

What Paul is actually going to claim. You see, part of the problem we have with the Christian faith is of the mind. We have different objections to it. But part of it is of the heart.

[16:30] And sometimes, many times, we don't want certain things in Christianity to be true. But what if what Paul is about to reveal, like, what if it's true?

Like, I'm going to suggest to you that if it's true, don't you want it to be true? Like, what Paul is about to say, if we're honest, we want something very much like that to be true.

Well, some of you might say don't believe things just because of wish fulfillment. I agree with you, but we're going to walk towards what he says and we're going to just think about it as well as some of the reasons as to what's going on and why it's important.

Look at verse 6. If you're following along in your own Bibles, what I've done here, if you're using the ESV, which is usually what I have up on the screen, I've translated this a little bit different.

Just trust me, I'm not like some Christian authors who go looking for a translation of the Bible to fit what they want to say. It's actually bringing out what the original language says very clearly, which is a bit more awkward in English.

[17:45] So my translation is a bit more awkward, but it's capturing what is actually there in the original language, and that's this, verse 6. This mystery is that the pagans, the Gentiles, are co-heirs, co-members of the same body, co-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus.

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See, if you've been here or if you go back and you read Ephesians, you'll see there's many powerful images of what happened. Jesus died on a cross. I mean, he lived a human life.

All the records are that he lived an exemplary human life, and Christians claim that he lived a life always in obedience to God with no type of sin. He dies on a cross, and his death upon the cross is not just a, it's not a tragedy.

It's actually everything in his life was moving towards him dying upon the cross, and because he's, he's in a sense the perfect man, the second Adam, and also God's son, what happens on the cross is something that can actually stand or have a bearing for everyone.

[19:00] I shared a couple of weeks ago about how, if you think about it for a second, because he's God's son as well as a human being, that what happens in history at one time in one place just

outside of the gates and the walls of Jerusalem is a man dying a death by crucifixion.

But at the same time, because of who he is, in a sense, it's something which is happening in eternity, outside of time, and by being outside of time and for all eternity and something that can touch every human being.

And so what's going on with the death of Jesus and the cross and his resurrection is this profound substitution and exchange and transaction that God does for us human beings because we cannot do it for ourselves, whereby, in a sense, all of our alienation, all of our shame, all of our wrongdoing, all of the accusations that could be made against us, all of these fall upon him.

And his great goodness and his destiny is given to us. And I've given the image over several weeks. It's as if when we call out to Christ to be our Savior, it's as if he comes and wraps his arms around you.

And there is this profound act of uniting. I mean, he's still him and you're still you, but there's this profound act of uniting where it turns out because Jesus is, Christ is outside of time but he died in time that on that cross, even though it was 2,000 years ago for me, I died on that cross with him and I am raised with him and I am ascended with him.

[20 : 45] And now Paul is going even farther than this because he describes how in a sense what I've just described is not just what happens to me, it's what happens to you and to you and to you and to you and to you.

It means that this morning if there is a person who's the head of an LGBTQ plus chapter, a lesbian, and she gives herself to Christ, Christ embraces her and is united with her and she dies with Christ and is raised with Christ and becomes a new person in Christ.

And if this, and if today there is somebody in Kenya in Nairobi who's a lawyer and he gives himself to Christ today, that same thing is happening to that man in Nairobi.

and we could go on and on and on and on in the underground church in Iran if sometime today some person bows the knee and asks Jesus to come into their life, Jesus comes and so hugs and is united to him or to her that they die with Jesus and are raised with Jesus and that there is now a new type of human on the planet not by works, not by pride, not by arrogance, not by accomplishment, but the lesbian, the Chinese, the straight old guy, that's me, that waitress from the deep south, African American, the Asian couple, each of us, although Asian and African and American, we all individually are a new human and God doesn't just make new humans, he creates a new society that all of us become members of by adoption and grace and so whether it is that lesbian that I described or the Kenyan lawyer or somebody in the underground church in Iran or somebody in post-modern, post-capitalist

Ottawa today, each of us together become co-heirs of the new heaven and the new earth through Jesus and both of us, all of us are equally members of the same body and each of us equally and fully are partakers of the same promise and reality, partakers of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and the love that exists between them that will go on for all eternity and one day become the new heaven and the new earth.

[23 : 51] And Paul is saying that is what is happening, what God in his grace and mercy is doing. That is the mystery that God who made all human beings equally, whether you are from China or Kenya or South America or Iran or Canada, French or English, whatever language, from India, he made all human beings equally to bear his image and his likeness.

and through our desire to be God ourselves, that which should be a wonderful tapestry of beauty, the beauty of languages and the beauty of culture and the beauty of old and young and tall and short and of colors and this beautiful manifold tapestry of beauty that God had created the human race to be became a source of pride and anger and envy and racism and prejudice and hatred and war.

But that is not how God designed it. And it is not the end of the story. The end of the story is in a far greater garden than my Kenyan brother and my same-sex attracted sister.

And my Chinese sister and I will be in the garden together walking with our Heavenly Father in the cool of the evening. That is the end of the story.

Through the gospel ordinary people of every race and culture become co-heirs co-members of the same body and co-partakers of the promise of God.

[25 : 54] I just want to pause for a second. Why is it that human beings have any longings or yearnings at all?

Like, why do we have any? Like, unless, I mean, there may be some people who don't recognize longings and yearnings, but I think most human beings recognize these, that there are longings and yearnings.

Maybe it is you have gone on a canoe trip and you're with your best friends or your family and you've had a wonderful day of canoeing, you've had a wonderful meal, you're sitting around the campfire, there's a nice breeze so there's no bugs, and you're full and you're joking and you're just with each other and the stars and it just looks so beautiful and you just think, this is just somehow not just something earthly, but something transcendent, touching on something more and surely there's even more to this and it's a type of enjoyment and longing which we view as a high point in maybe our week or month or year.

or maybe it's just on a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful spring day, the snow's melting and it's just the perfect temperature and you can feel the new life coming and you're feeling healthy and there's no pain in your body or maybe there's a little bit of pain in your body but you just look around and say, this is just so touching on something transcendent, something bigger, than experience and at the same time that we have this sense of it's just so right that we have a sense that there must be more. Why does any human being have any experience like that ever? Like if you think about it, we shouldn't have them. We just happen by evolution and when we die, that's it.

[28 : 05] There's nothing transcendent, there's just the next meal if you want to be brutally honest. But we human beings know that there's something that's longings and yearnings and why is it?

Why is it that human beings long? Why is it that if we see something, maybe it's a YouTube video, maybe we're just walking down the street and we see a park and we see kids of every race and culture, not all maybe even able to speak English and we just see them all playing together on a beautiful day and it just looks so beautiful and we say to ourselves, that's just so right.

Why is it that that's right and what China and India wants to do is wrong? Like why is it that that's right and being racist is just wrong?

Like where do these things come from and how on earth can they possibly be grounded? Where does it come from and can it be true?

As I've shared, the Bible says that the story that Canada tells about who we are is just wrong. We are created in the image of God. We are fallen and because we are created, God has continued to put within us and allow to have within us some hints that there is more to this life, that there is in fact a God that exists, that there is in fact a way that he intended and we long for it and I suggest to you that if you follow the longings and yearnings of your heart, it will lead you to God.

[29 : 52] It will lead you to understand what Paul is revealing in the gospel. It will clarify it and ground it. See, I began by saying what if this picture is true?

And on one level, isn't that exactly what we long to be true? What Paul is announcing that God originally did and what he is doing and has done in Christ and what will in fact be the very, very end of the story and Paul is saying this not because he's proud, not because he's arrogant, he is the least of the least of the least of the least of the saints.

It has been revealed to him what God has done and is doing in the person of his son as he died upon the cross and rose from the dead. Now we need to wrap this up.

The big question that often comes to people when they think about stuff like this, when I talk about things even remotely like this in a coffee shop, is once again, how is our mind hardwired?

Usually when people make a claim like that, it means the next thing is, that's why I should be in power. Or in our case, that's why we should be in power. Is that what Paul does next?

[31 : 05] Not at all. Look how he moves. This is very, very important. Look at verses 7 to 9. Of this gospel, I was made a minister and the word for minister is the word for servant.

So of this gospel, I was made a servant according to the gift of God's grace, which was given to me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints.

And in the original language, you could actually say the least of the least of the least of the least of the least. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given.

What?

To rule? To have authority? To be an elite? To look down your nose at other people? No! A servant! To preach? To proclaim? To every people group?

The unsearchable riches of Christ? The gospel makes no one poorer.

[32 : 06] Do you believe this? Do you believe that to come to know Jesus as your Savior and Lord will only make you richer? Will only make me richer? Could you pray for me that that will be the

habit of how I think as I go through my day?

That for any person that I get to share the gospel with, if they come to a faith in Christ, they are coming to faith in the one whose riches are untraceable, unsearchable, will never, ever, ever, ever come to an end.

Every human being will only be richer when they come to faith in Jesus. Do you believe that? Can we pray for each other that we will believe it as a habit of being, as a habit of how we think?

By the grace of God, you are called to be a servant who proclaims, one of a servant who proclaims to the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ.

You see, what I would say is for those of us who walk by on a beautiful fall day and see a playground and see a whole pile of unbelievably adorable three-year-olds playing together of all the colors of the rainbow and of different ethnicities and not even maybe being able to speak English to each other.

[33 : 51] They're speaking their own languages, but they're just playing and they are having a great time and their parents are standing around. Whether they're talking or not, they're just all enjoying the day and enjoying their kids.

And we see that and we have a sense that that is somehow how things should be. No matter how secular or atheist you are and you have a sense, maybe even a sense of longing or yearning that that is the way that that should be.

That which you know but don't know why it should be other than that you think it should be, the gospel proclaims to you because that is how God created things to be.

That is what he is redeeming things to be. That is what he does through the gospel. That is what he desires to do through the church. And that is what the new heaven and the new earth will be like.

And it can be only achieved and entered into by faith and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. The Bible doesn't kill your longings and yearnings but helps you to understand them and interpret them to kill the ones which are fell and evil and to walk towards those which are rooted in creation redeemed in redemption and will be true for all eternity.

[35 : 15] I just want to wrap up. There is something which comes next in verse 10. I am just going to put it up there. It just, it blows my mind.

I don't know how to communicate it. I just have to show you because you probably missed it when you were reading it. Look at what verse 10 says as we just wrap this up. Remember he said how what God is doing, the mystery is is that when you put our faith in Christ whether it is whoever it is you become a new humanity in Christ and he's creating this new society that is multiracial, multicultural, multilinguistic, multiethnic but one society, one reality.

And then look at what he says in verse 10. So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenlies.

And whether that just means different ranks of angels, and whether it means different ranks of angels, the heavens, that's a better way to put it. There's no real simple English word for this idea that above whatever is physical that there is a realm, a realm, a real realm of spiritual beings of both angels and demons and ranks upon ranks of both.

And the Bible is saying that what God is doing through the church as hard it is for us to believe because we are lowly and weak is a graduate school seminar that angels and demons are studying.

[36 : 48] I don't know how to communicate that. And how can anybody communicate that other than that's what the Bible says? only God could use lowly local gospel churches to make known His manifold wisdom to the rulers and authorities in the heavens.

We are weak and from a Canadian point of view irrelevant. In fact, maybe even dangerous. But that is not the truth.

This should encourage us to pray. Let's just finish and then we will pray. This was according to the eternal purpose, verse 11, that He is realized in Christ Jesus our Lord in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him.

So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you which is your glory. To be gripped by the gospel and gripped by the scripture is to know that we have access to God and we can be bold in prayer.

I invite you all to stand. Thank you. If you have not yet given your life to Christ, there is no better time right now than to say, Lord, I have fears about you.

[38 : 25] I have fears about what you will do in my life but I know that you are the end of my longings and the end of my yearnings and that what you have done for me in Jesus is what I need to make me right with you and one, with all that you are doing, Father, there is no other way than by faith in Jesus and so, Father, I ask that Jesus would come into my life, that he would be my Savior and that he would be my Lord and I know that he will never let me go and so, Father, I give myself to him.

Please take me, all of me, with nothing left over from this day forward to all eternity. I give myself to you. There is no better time than right now to call out to him.

For those of us who are weary and broken down by our lowliness, there is no better time than right now to call out to the Lord and say, Father, thank you so much for your word.

Use my lowliness for your glory. Fan in the flame within me deeper longings and yearnings, true longings and yearnings.

And grow within me a deeper sense of how even in our lowliness you are doing things which have eternal significance.

[39 : 47] There is no better time than now to call out to him for that. Father, pour out the Holy Spirit upon us. Pour out the Holy Spirit upon us. Pour out the Holy Spirit upon us. Jesus, pour out the Holy Spirit upon us.

Make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel. Learning to live for your glory. Learning to winsomely and quietly share who Jesus is and what he has done is doing and will do.

Help us, Father, not to say people's no for them or to think of ourselves as the world thinks of us, but, Father, make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel.

Understanding who we are from who Jesus is and what you have revealed in your word. And make us servants, Father, make us servants for your glory and for people's good.

And all God's people said, Amen.